

Organisation name	Ratcliffe College, Leicester
Inspection date	5 October 2023
Current accreditation status	Accredited
Reason for spot check	Routine: newly accredited institution

Recommendation

We recommend continued accreditation. The next inspection falls due in 2026; there are no grounds for bringing this forward.

Changes to the summary statement

No changes need to be made to the summary statement, apart from adding the date of this inspection.

New summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited Ratcliffe College in March 2022 with this spot check in October 2023.

The Accreditation Scheme assesses the standards of management, resources and premises, teaching, welfare, and safeguarding under 18s and accredits organisations which meet the overall standard in each area inspected (see www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation for details).

This private school offers courses in general English for students up to the age of 18 years.

Strengths were noted in the areas of premises and facilities, care of students, accommodation, leisure opportunities, and safeguarding under 18s.

The inspection report stated that the organisation met the standards of the Scheme.

Updated summary inspection findings

None.

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	March 2022
Last full inspection	2022
Subsequent spot check(s) (if applicable)	N/a
Subsequent supplementary check(s) (if applicable)	N/a
Subsequent interim visit(s) (if applicable)	N/a
Other related non-accredited activities (in brief) at this centre	GCSE and A level courses
Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates	N/a
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	N/a

Student and staff profile	At inspection	In peak week: October
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	43	43
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	11	11
Typical age range	11–18	11–18
Typical length of stay	5 years	5 years
Predominant nationalities	Chinese, Chilean, Spanish	Chinese, Chilean, Spanish
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	2	2

Total number of managers including academic	1	1
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	11	11

Premises profile

Address of main site	Fosse Way, Ratcliffe on the Wreake, Leicester LE7 4SG
Additional sites in use	N/a
Additional sites not in use	N/a
Sites inspected	Main site

Introduction

Background

Ratcliffe College is a co-educational Catholic independent boarding and day school in the village of Ratcliffe on the Wreake, Leicestershire, approximately seven miles from the city of Leicester. Founded in 1847, the college offers courses for students aged 3–18 years, with boarding from the age of 11. English as an Additional Language (EAL) lessons form part of the GCSE, Key Stage 3 and A level programmes that students undertake and are available to international students from the age of 11 whose first language is not English. Since the 2022 full inspection, the EAL unit has moved into a new English centre that opened in September 2023 where it has its own classroom and access, if necessary, to others. Students from the age of seven are accepted onto summer programmes. At the time of the inspection, 43 students were enrolled on EAL courses at the college.

Preparation

This was a routine spot check following the college's first inspection in March 2022. The spot check inspector was sent relevant documents by the Accreditation Unit and looked at the college's website. The college was contacted in advance to agree a suitable window for the visit.

Programme and persons present

The inspector arrived at the school's main building at 11.00 and left at 15.45. He met the EAL Coordinator, the EAL teacher, the HR manager, the admissions manager and the marketing manager. He asked to see various documents, which were provided in paper form or electronically. He observed one class briefly.

Findings

Since the first inspection, an additional teacher has joined the EAL team.

Other findings are reported in the Action taken on points to be addressed.

Action taken on points to be addressed

Points from the previous full inspection and/or subsequent spot checks or interim visits with comments (in bold) to indicate how far these have been addressed.

Management

M18 Information on the level of English spoken by emergency contacts was not available for current students.

Addressed. This information is now included on student registration forms.

M27 Details of accommodation are incomplete and do not include how many students share bathroom facilities or that up to three students can share a bedroom. The policy on the allocation of single rooms is not made clear.

Partially addressed. The number of students per bedroom is now included in publicity but not how many students share bathroom facilities.

M28 Staff are described as "specialist teachers" and "extremely well qualified teachers" which cannot be substantiated for all staff at all times.

Addressed. No such descriptions are included in current publicity.

Premises and resources

P12 There is no formalised system for the review and development of teaching and learning resources.

Partially addressed. The previously informal review of coursebooks against student outcomes is currently being formalised as the EAL unit staff numbers increase.

Teaching and learning

T7 There are insufficient arrangements in place to ensure appropriate cover for the EAL co-ordinator for any last minute or prolonged periods of time in particular.

Addressed. A new member of teaching staff has recently been recruited by the EAL unit. This person can cover for the co-ordinator.

T10 The EAL co-ordinator is the only TEFLQ member of staff. There are currently no provisions in place for her to be observed by a qualified member of staff.

Not addressed. The new teacher is TEFLI, so there are still no other suitably qualified (TEFLQ) members of staff able to observe the EAL co-ordinator teaching.

T11 The coursebook provides the frame for each course but there is little guidance for teachers on how to ensure that students' needs are addressed in the syllabus and the overall teaching philosophy of the EAL department.

Partially addressed. Achieving student needs and the department's teaching philosophy are increasingly being documented as it grows in numbers.

T13 Course outlines are not available to students.

Partially addressed. There are no unified course outlines but elements are included in coursebook schemes and the explanatory comments that preface the expanding range of workbooks that complement the coursebooks.

T16 Insufficient attention is paid to incorporating the local community and activity programme in course design documents.

Addressed. The local community and activity programme is now fully incorporated in the course design.

T19 Students are grouped according to age. It is not always possible to create homogenous groups based on their levels of English.

Partially addressed. The EAL unit is still required to teach year groups but the increase in the number of teachers has made it possible to revert to the pre-pandemic process of splitting groups.

Legal and regulatory compliance

D1 Students or parents are asked to opt out of the use of photographic images in publicity in the terms and conditions.

Addressed. The college has consulted the relevant body and followed its advice.

Conclusions

The college has systematically addressed the issues identified in its full report and is formalising systems as staff numbers grow.
